

Sūrah Al-Ḥijr

Sūrah al-Ḥijr was revealed in Makkah and it has 99 Verses and 6 sections

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

With the name of Allah, the Most-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Verses 1 - 5

الرَّافِقِ تِلْكَ آيَةُ الْكِتَابِ وَقُرْآنٍ مُبِينٍ ﴿١﴾ رُبَّمَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ
كَانُوا مُسْلِمِينَ ﴿٢﴾ ذَرْهُمْ يَأْكُلُوا وَيَتَمَتَّعُوا وَيُلْهِهِمُ الْأَمَلُ فَسَوْفَ
يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣﴾ وَمَا أَهْلَكْنَا مِنْ قَرْيَةٍ إِلَّا وَلَهَا كِتَابٌ مَعْلُومٌ ﴿٤﴾ مَا تَسْبِقُ
مِنْ أُمَّةٍ أَجَلَهَا وَمَا يَسْتَأْخِرُونَ ﴿٥﴾

Alif, Lām, Rā. These are verses of the Book, the Qur'ān which makes things clear. [1]

On occasions, the disbelievers would wish that they were Muslims. [2] Let them eat and enjoy, and let (their) fancy make them neglectful, for they shall soon come to know. [3]

And We did not destroy any town, but it had a pre-determined decree. [4] No people can precede their appointed time nor can they exceed it. [5]

Commentary

From: *ذَرْهُمْ يَأْكُلُوا.....* (Let them eat ...3) we can see that the making of eating and drinking the real occupation and aim of life, and keeping glued to long-drawn material plans while surrounded by countless things of worldly comfort, and becoming totally heedless to death, is something which can be done only by the disbelievers. The reason is that they do not believe in the 'Ākhirah, the life to come, and the accounting

of deeds there, and the reward and punishment for it. As for eating and drinking, a believer does it too, and takes care of economic needs to the measure of necessity, and makes future plans for occupation and business as well. But, a believer would not make all these efforts by forgetting death and ignoring the concern for 'Ākhirah. Therefore, he is careful about everything he does and finds out whether it is Ḥalāl or Ḥarām, permissible or forbidden. Then, he does not occupy himself in the making of wasteful or unnecessary plans and projections, as hobby or compulsion. The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: Four things are signs of being unfortunate: (1) Not being able to shed tears (that is, not being in tears when ashamed of acts of negligence and sin); (2) and hard-heartedness; (3) fanciful hopes and plans for the future; (4) and the greed for worldly things. (Qurtubī from Musnad al-Bazzār from Sayyidnā Anas ؓ)

And the expression: يُلَبِّسُهُمُ الْأَمَلُ 'let (their) fancy make them neglectful' means the making of long-drawn plans with engrossing love, and the greed for the material without any concern for death and 'Ākhirah. (Qurtubī) As for plans made to achieve religious objectives, or those made to guard the future interests of a people or country, they are not included here - because, that is a form of the concern for 'Ākhirah itself.

The Holy Prophet ﷺ said: The first set of people from this Ummah will have their salvation because of their perfect faith, and avoidance of the pursuit of the material (*dunyā*); and the later people of the Ummah will be destroyed because of miserliness, and fancies projected too far.

It has been reported from Sayyidnā Abū Ad-Dardā' ؓ that he stood up on the Mimbar of Jami' Masjid of Damascus and said:

'O people of Damascus, would you listen to what this well-wishing brother of yours has to say? So, listen to me. There have been big people before you who made big money, collected gold and things, built magnificent palaces and made long-hauled plans and projections for the future. Today they are dust. Their residences are their graves. And all their long winded hopes and plans have proved to be no more than a web of deception. Close to you lived the people of 'Ād who had stuffed their country with their fighting men, wealth, means, possessions, arms and horses. Is there someone around who would be ready to buy what they left behind as their legacy for two silver *dirhams* from me?'

Imām Al-Ḥasan Al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى said: A person with long plans, hopes and fancies is bound to ruin his proper conduct in life. (Al-Qurṭubī)

Verses 6 - 8

وَقَالُوا يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِي نُزِّلَ عَلَيْهِ الذِّكْرُ إِنَّكَ لَمَجْنُونٌ ﴿٦﴾ لَوْ مَا تَأْتِينَا
بِالْمَلَكَةِ إِنْ كُنْتَ مِنَ الصَّادِقِينَ ﴿٧﴾ مَا نُنَزِّلُ الْمَلَكَةَ إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَمَا
كَانُوا إِذَا مُنْظَرِينَ ﴿٨﴾

And they said, "O you to whom the Dhikr (the Qur'ān) has been revealed, you are certainly insane. [6] Why do you not bring the angels to us if you are among the truthful?" [7] We do not send down the angels except with what is true and then they shall be given no respite. [8]

Explanatory Notes

1. The word: الْحَقَّ (what is true) in: إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ (*illā bi al-ḥaqq*: translated as 'except with what is true') means the decision to send down punishment. Some commentators take them to be denoting the Qur'ān, or prophethood. In Bayān al-Qur'ān, preferance has been given to the first meaning which has been reported from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī. Maulānā Ashraf 'Alī Thānavī has explained these verses as given below.

2. And these disbelievers (of Makkah) said to the Holy Prophet ﷺ: "O you to whom the Qur'ān has been revealed, (as you claim, then,) you are certainly (God forbid) insane (and your claim to prophethood is false, otherwise) why would you not bring the angels to us (who will testify your truthfulness before us - as in Sūrah Al-Furqān: 'لَوْ لَا أَنْزَلْنَا إِلَيْهِ مَلَكًا فَيَكُونُ مَعَهُ' : نَذِيرًا 'Why is not an angel sent down unto him, to be a warner with him? [25:7] which is answered by Allah Ta'ālā:) We send down the angels (in the manner asked by them) only to enforce a decision (and had that been the case) then they would have been given no respite either (in fact, when they would have not believed even after their having come - as their ways guarantee - they would have been destroyed instantly, the reason for which has already appeared in the later verses of the first section of Sūrah Al-An'ām: 6:8,9).

Verse 9

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴿٩﴾

We, Ourselves, have sent down the Dhikr (the Qur'ān),
and We are there to protect it. [9]

Commentary

An Episode from the Court of Ma'mūn

Imām Al-Qurṭubī has authentically reported an event from the court of 'Abbāsī Khalīfah, Al-Ma'mūn. He was used to patronizing occasional debates on intellectual issues at his court where all scholars were welcome. It so happened that a Jew came to attend one of these debates. By his looks, dress and manners, he seemed to be an elegant person. Then, his address during the debate was eloquent and intellectually bright. When the meeting was over, Ma'mūn called for him and asked him if he was an Israelite, which he confirmed. To test him, Ma'mūn asked him to become a Muslim in which case he could hope to have the best possible treatment from him.

He said that he was not willing to leave the religion of his forefathers which was his religion too. The matter ended there. That person went away. Then, after a year, the same person returned as a Muslim and made a very distinct contribution in the court meeting on the subject of Islamic jurisprudence. After the session was over, Ma'mūn called for him and asked him if he was the same person who had come last year. He said: Yes, I am. Ma'mūn asked: At that time you had refused to accept Islam. Tell me what made you accept Islam now.

He said: When I went back from here, I decided to do some research on contemporary religions. I am a scribe. I write books and sell them. They bring good price. This time I wanted to make a test. First, I calligraphed three manuscripts of the Torah in which I made some additions and deletions on my own. I took these manuscripts to the Synagogue. The Jews found them interesting and bought them. Then, I did the same things with the Injīl. I calligraphed three manuscripts, complete with my additions and deletions, and took them to the Church where the Christians were pleased with these manuscripts and bought them from me. After that, I tried the same thing with the Qur'ān. I calligraphed three good looking manuscripts of the Qur'ān, of course with the usual addi-

tions and deletions of my own. When I went out to sell them, I faced a problem. Every buyer I went to would take the manuscript, look into it to determine if it was correct or not, and when he would notice additions or deletions made into it, he would quietly return the manuscript back to me.

From this episode, I learnt my lesson that this Book is protected, and protected by Allah Ta'ālā Himself, therefore, I embraced Islam. Qādī Yaḥyā ibn Aktham, the narrator of this event says that, by chance, he had the *taufīq* of performing his Ḥajj in the same year. There he met Sufyān ibn 'Uyainah to whom he related this event. He said: Surely, this is how it should be because this is confirmed by the Qur'an. Yaḥyā ibn Aktham asked about the *āyah* he had in mind. He said: When the glorious Qur'an mentions the Torah and the Injīl, there it says: *بِمَا اسْتَحْفِظُوا مِنْ كِتَابِ اللَّهِ* (that is, the Jews and Christians have been entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the Torah and Injīl, the Books of Allah - 5:44). This is the reason why, when the Jews and Christians did not fulfill their duty of protecting them, these Books were lost through distortions and alterations. This is contrary to the case of the Holy Qur'an about which Allah Ta'ālā has said: *إِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ* (And We are there to protect it - 9). Thus, when Allah Ta'ālā Himself arranged to have it remain protected, then, despite thousands of efforts made by enemies, not a single change in one tiny dot or case mark could be made. Today, over fourteen hundred years have passed since even the blessed age of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and there has been a shortfall and neglect on the part of Muslims in all areas of their religious matters, yet the continuous arrangement of memorizing the Holy Qur'an all over the world stands firmly established as it was. In every period of time, there are millions of Muslims, old and young, male and female, always present on the scene, blessed people in whose hearts and minds the Holy Qur'an lives protected. Before them, not even the highest of the high religious scholar can dare recite a single letter of the Qur'an wrong, for there would be around at that time many, seniors or children, who would promptly apprehend the error.

The Promise to Protect the Qur'an Includes the Protection of Ḥadīth

As a matter of principle, all learned people agree that the Qur'an is neither the name of the words of the Qur'an alone, nor that of its meanings alone, instead, a combination of both is called the Qur'an. The rea-

son is that Qur'ānic meanings and subjects appear in other books as well, and as for Islamic writings, their subjects are essentially Qur'ānic, but they are not called Qur'ān - because, they are not the words of the Qur'ān. Similarly, if a person were to borrow different words and sentences from the Holy Qur'ān and write an article or treatise, no one will call this too by the name of Qur'ān, even though there is no word from outside the Qur'ān. This tells us that the Qur'ān is the exclusive name of the particular Divinely revealed Book the words and meanings of which are simultaneously protected.

This also leads us to the ruling that the practice of people who publish the translation of the Qur'ān only in a foreign language and give it the name, for example, an English Qur'ān or an Urdu Qur'ān, is not permissible at all - because, that is not the Qur'ān. And when we know that Qur'ān is not the name of the words of the Qur'ān alone, but that its meaning too are a part of it, then, the responsibility of protecting the Qur'ān taken upon Himself in this verse by Allah Ta'ālā covers the total protection of the words of the Qur'ān as well as the meanings of the Qur'ān in that they remain protected against alteration or distortion.

And it is obvious that the meanings of the Qur'ān are the same as the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sent to teach - as pointed out in the Qur'ān: لَتُبَيِّنَ لِلنَّاسِ مَا نُزِّلَ إِلَيْهِمْ (16:44). It means: 'You have been sent to explain the meaning of what has been revealed for them.' And this is what the verse: يُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْعِلْمَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ : 'Teaches them the Book and the Wisdom' (3:164) also means. And that is why he said:

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ مُعَلِّمًا

'As for me, I have been sent as a teacher.'

Now, when the Holy Prophet ﷺ was sent to explain the meanings of the Qur'ān and to impart education to people, then, he used a set of his sayings and doings as the medium of instruction for his community, and this very set of his words and deeds is known as the Ḥadīth.

One who says that the Aḥādīth of the Rasūl of Allah are not absolutely protected is really saying that the Qur'ān is not protected.

There are people around who would like to deceive the whole world by saying that the treasure of Aḥādīth present in authentic books is not

trustworthy because it has been documented much later than the blessed age of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. First of all, even this assumption of theirs is not correct because the process of protection and documentation of Aḥādīth had already started within the age of prophethood itself, though it was completed later. In addition to that, the Ḥadīth of the Rasūl of Allah is really the explanation of the Qur'ān and the meaning of the Qur'ān. Their protection is something which Allah Ta'ālā has taken upon Himself. Then, how can it be possible that only the words of the Qur'ān remain protected while the meanings of the Qur'ān (that is, the Aḥādīth of the Rasūl) go to waste?

Verses 10 - 15

وَلَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ فِي شُعَيْبٍ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٠﴾ وَمَا يَأْتِيهِمْ مِنْ رَسُولٍ إِلَّا كَانُوا بِهِ يَسْتَهْزِءُونَ ﴿١١﴾ كَذَلِكَ نَسُكُّهُمْ فِي قُلُوبِ الْمُحْرِمِينَ ﴿١٢﴾ لَا يُؤْمِنُونَ بِهِ وَقَدْ خَلَتْ سُنَّةُ الْأَوَّلِينَ ﴿١٣﴾ وَلَوْ فَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ بَابًا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَظَلُّوا فِيهِ يَعْرُجُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ لَقَالُوا إِنَّمَا سُكِّرَتْ أَبْصَارُنَا بَلْ نَحْنُ قَوْمٌ مَسْحُورُونَ ﴿١٥﴾

And We did send the messengers before you among the groups of earlier peoples. [10] And no messenger came to them but they used to mock at him. [11] This is how We make it enter into the hearts of the sinners, [12] (whereby) they do not believe in it (the Qur'ān). And this has been the way of earlier people. [13] And even if We were to open a gate in the sky and they keep ascending through it, [14] still they will say, "It is nothing but that our eyes have been deluded and that we are a people bewitched. [15]

A Lexical Note of Explanation

The word: *شُعَيْبٍ* in the first verse (10) is the plural form of: *شَيْعَةٍ* (*shī'ah*) which means the follower or helper of a person. Then, it is also used to denote a group which agrees upon particular beliefs and theoretical assumptions. So, the sense of the statement is that Allah Ta'ālā has sent messengers among every group or sect. Here, by using the word: *فِي* (*fī*) in: *فِي شُعَيْبٍ الْأَوَّلِينَ* in place of *إِلَى* : *ilā*: to (translated as 'among the groups of

earlier peoples'), the hint given is that the messenger for every group was sent from among that particular group so that people would find it easy to trust him, and that he too, by being aware of their taste and temperament, could make appropriate plans to work for their reform.

Verse 16

وَلَقَدْ جَعَلْنَا فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَزَيَّنَّاهَا لِلنَّاظِرِينَ ﴿١٦﴾

And We have created stellar formations in the sky and have beautified them for the onlookers. [16]

Sequence

Mentioned in the previous verses was the doggedness and hostility of deniers and disbelievers. In the present verse, and in those which follow immediately after, clear proofs of the Oneness, Knowledge and Power of Allah Ta'ālā have been given. Described alongside is what transpires before His creation between the heavens and the earth, a little deliberation in which on the part of a sensible person would make any denial impossible.

Commentary

The word: بُرُوجًا is the plural of: بُرْج (burj) which is applied to big palaces and castles and to similar other structural entities. Tafsīr authorities Mujaḥid, Qatādah, Abū Ṣāliḥ and others have explained 'burūj' at this place in the sense of big stars. As for the statement in this verse which points to the creation of these big stars in the sky, the word: السَّمَاء (as-samā') or sky means atmosphere which, in common modern day terminology, is called the 'space.' The application of 'as-samā'' in both these senses is common, and recognized. Thus, the physical presence of deep space is identified as 'as-samā'' and the atmosphere much lower than it has also been repeatedly termed as 'as-samā'' in the Holy Qur'ān. As for the planets and stars being in the space, and not in the skies, the relevant investigative details, as coordinated with the verses of the Qur'ān and classical and modern astronomy, will Inshallah appear under our comments on the verse: تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ فِي السَّمَاءِ بُرُوجًا وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا سِرَاجًا وَقَمَرًا مُنِيرًا (Blessed is He Who made in the sky stellar formations and made in it the Sun and the Moon providing light) of Sūrah Al-Furqān (25 :61).

Verses 17 - 18

وَحَفِظْنَاهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْطَانٍ رَجِيمٍ ﴿١٧﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ اسْتَرَقَ السَّمْعَ فَاتَّبَعَهُ
شِهَابٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٨﴾

... and have protected them from every outcast satan, [17]
but the one who tries to eavesdrop is chased by a clearly
visible flame. [18]

Commentary

The Meteor

The first thing these verses prove is that the satans have no access to the heavens. That Shayṭān the accursed was in the heavens at the time of the creation of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام and that he deceived 'Ādam and Ḥawwā (Eve) عليهما السلام were events which took place before they appeared on the earth. Upto that time, the entry of the Jinns and satans in the heavens was not prohibited. It was after the coming down of Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام and the expulsion of the Shayṭān that this entry was banned. From what has been said in Sūrah Al-Jinn: إِنَّا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ فَمَنْ يَسْتَمِعِ الْآنَ يَجِدْ لَهُ شِهَابًا رَصَدًا (And we used to sit in ambush at places from it so as to eavesdrop. Whoever then tries to hear would find for him a flame in hot pursuit - 72:9), it appears that, before the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, the satans could overhear about things happening in the heaven through the mutual conversation of angels. This does not necessarily imply that the satans used to hear about such information by entering into the heavens. The first sentence of the verse quoted above: نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ gives the sense that they would enter the atmospheric zone where clouds abound like thieves, would sit there in ambush and hear. These words themselves are indicative of no other possibility but that the entry of the Jinns and the satans had continued to be banned in the heavens - but, they would reach the outer atmosphere of the skies and hear a little by stealth. It was after the advent of the Prophet of Islam, peace and blessings be on him, that an additional arrangement was activated when the satans were stopped even from this covert eavesdropping through meteors or shooting stars (*Al-Shihāb Al-Thāqib*) which zoom in upon them from the outer space with enormous speed.

Now the question, as to how could the satans hear the conversation

of angels taking place inside the heavens while they were out of it, is not something just impossible. It is quite probable that the heavenly bodies not be prohibitive of the audition of sounds, and it is also not far out that the angels sometimes come lower down the heavens and engage themselves in some conversation hearing which the satans used to run. A Ḥadīth of Sayyidah 'Ā'ishah رضى الله عنها appearing in the Ṣaḥīḥ of Al-Bukhārī confirms this very probability. She said that the angels sometimes come down as far as where the clouds are and talk about the heavenly happenings among themselves. It was in this atmospheric zone of the skies that the satans used to hide themselves in to hear this news. This furtive effort of theirs was stopped through Al-Shihāb Al-Thāqib, the shooting stars. Detailed comments on this subject will, Inshallah, appear in Sūrah Al-Jinn under our exegesis of the verse: *أَنَا كُنَّا نَقْعُدُ مِنْهَا مَقَاعِدَ لِلسَّمْعِ* (72:9).

Now, the second question we have here is that of Al-Shihāb Al-Thāqib, meteors or shooting stars, in these verses. According to the statements of the Holy Qur'ān, it appears that these '*shihābs*' or flames are formed to hit the satans in order that the revelation remains protected. In other words, the satans are driven away through them so that they would not overhear angels.

The difficult part of the question relates to the fact that the presence of shooting stars in outer space is nothing new. Falling stars were seen even before the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ - and this phenomena continues later than that as well. If so, how can it be said that the shooting stars show up to drive the satans away, which is the particular feature of the age of the Holy Prophet ﷺ? Obviously, this seems to support the view of the scientists who say that meteors become so hot from rushing through the air that they glow and often burn up which gives onlookers the impression that a star has fallen. Therefore, in usage, this is identified as a falling star. The Arabic language itself has an expression: *إِنْقِذَاقُ الْكَوْكَبِ* (*inqiḏāq al-kaukab*) which is a virtual synonym, of the falling of a star.

However, the answer is that there is no contradiction here. One or more scientific explanations for this phenomena could be possible, for example, vapours rising from the earth surface may heat up at some point, or the speed of the meteors makes them glow and burn, or a flame emits

from a star - and this may have habitually continued since ever. But, before the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, these flames were not employed to serve a particular purpose. However, after his coming, meteoric flames were employed to serve the purpose of shooting the satans who would come up to stealthily hear the conversation of angels.

This is how 'Allāmah Al-'Ālūsī has interpreted it in Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī. There he reports that someone asked Imām Ḥuhri, the Ḥadīth authority, that stars used to fall even before the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ. He said: "Yes." Thereupon, this person confronted him by quoting the verse cited above. Then he said: "The shooting stars, no doubt, did exist before - but, after the coming of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, when the satans were dealt with sternly, these were employed to drive them away."

In a Ḥadīth of the Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim, there is a narration from Sayyid-nā Ibn 'Abbās ؓ which reports the saying of the Holy Prophet ﷺ himself on this subject. According to this report, he was sitting with a group of his Ṣaḥābah when they saw a star falling. He asked them: What did you take the falling of a star to be during the days of Jāhiliyyah, that is, before Islam? They said: We took it to be a sign of some major upheaval in the world, or that a prominent man would die, or be born. He said: This is absurd. It has nothing to do with someone's death or birth. As for these flames, they are thrown to dispel the satans.

To sum up, it can be said that the view of scientists about the shooting stars is also not contrary to the Qur'ān, and it is also not too far out to state that these flames were made to fall directly from some stars. Whichever way it is taken, the purpose of the Qur'ān stands proved clearly.

Verses 19 - 25

وَالْأَرْضَ مَدَدْنَاهَا وَالْقَيْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ
مَوْزُونٍ ﴿١٩﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعَايِشَ وَمَنْ لَسْتُمْ لَهُ بِرِزْقِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾
وَأَنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنْزِلُهُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَعْلُومٍ ﴿٢١﴾
وَأَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيحَ لَوَاقِحَ فَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَاسْقَيْنَاكُمُوهُ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ

لَهُ، بِخَزَائِنَ ﴿٢٢﴾ وَأَنَّا لَنَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَنَحْنُ الْوَارِثُونَ ﴿٢٣﴾
وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَقْدِمِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُسْتَأْخِرِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾ وَإِنَّ
رَبَّكَ هُوَ يَحْشُرُهُمْ ۖ إِنَّهُ حَكِيمٌ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٥﴾

And We have spread out the earth and placed therein mountains, and caused to grow therein everything in balance, [19] and created therein sustenance for you, and those for whom you are not the sustainers. [20] There is nothing but We have treasures of it. And We do not send it down but in a determined quantity. [21]

And We sent forth winds, loaded then sent down water from the sky and gave it to you to drink, and you are not able to store it. [22]

And We, only We give life and bring death and We are the ultimate inheritor (of everything). [23]

And We know those of you who went ahead, and We know those who remained behind. [24] And surely, your Lord will gather them together. Surely, He is All-Wise, All-Knowing. [25]

Commentary

Divine Wisdom: Balanced Provision for Human Needs

One sense of the expression: مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَّوْزُونٍ (everything in balance - 19) is what has been taken in the present translation of the text, that is, it was in His infinite wisdom that He caused everything that grows to grow in a determined measure, not less than that which would have made life difficult, and not too much which would have also brought difficulties of a different nature. If grains like wheat and rice and the best of fruits around were to grow in such excess that stockpiles of them remain behind even after their liberal consumption by human beings and animals, then, it is obvious that they would go bad, or their possible storage (in ideal natural state) will be difficult under varying conditions, and if they had to be dumped, then, not much space will be left for such mega dumpings.

This tells us that it was also within the power of Allah Ta'ālā that He would have caused grains and fruits on which human life depends to grow in such abundance that everyone would have them free everywhere

so much so that, despite their care-free use, stores upon stores of them would have kept lying around. But, this situation could have turned into a punishment for human beings, therefore, these were provided in a particular measure and balance so that their worth and value remains actively recognized, and that they are not left over only to go to waste either.

And this expression: مِنْ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مَوْزُونٌ (everything in balance) could also be taken in the sense that Allāh Ta'ālā has created everything that grows in a suitable and proportionate manner which gives it beauty and attraction. Trees are different, so are their trunks, branches, leaves, flowers and fruits. Different are their sizes, shapes, colours and tastes. What one readily sees is their happy balance and delightful looks. Everyone enjoys having them around. But, a full comprehension of the wisdom which has gone into their making is not possible for any human being.

Water Supply : The Unique Divine Arrangement

In verse 22, from: وَأَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيَّاحَ (And We send forth winds ...) to: مَا أَنْتُمْ لَهُ بِخَازِنِينَ (and you are not able to store it), a hint has been given to this wise arrangement through which a formidable system has been established to provide water for all human beings, animals, cattle, birds and beasts who live on this earth as and when they need it. Under this arrangement, everyone gets water everywhere, under all conditions, as needed, for drinking or bathing or washing or for irrigating farms and trees. This is water at no cost. As for those who would spend to dig a well or put water pipes to receive the supply of water, they only pay for the means and facilities. No one can pay for even a drop of water, nor has anyone been asked to pay for it.

Mentioned first in the verse was how Divine power has set in motion its unique system of delivering water from the sea all over the earth by creating vapours in the sea which generated the substance of rains (the monsoons) and on top of it fanned the winds which would transform it into clouds making them as if they were mountain-like planes laden with water. Then, comes the task of having these giant planes carrying their cargo of water reach every nook and corner of the world where it must reach. And then this mission is accomplished directly under Divine command whereby these gigantic autoplanes would rain down a specific quantity of water over a specific area of the earth, as commanded.

In this manner, water from the sea is home-delivered to all inhabitants of the earth, human beings, and animals, wherever they may be. Then, this system takes care of seeing that an equally unique change is made in the taste and properties of the water being delivered. We know that Allah Ta'ālā has, in His wisdom, made sea water so salty and brackish that tons and tons of salt is extracted and used from it. The element of wisdom behind it is that this great sea sphere which is home to millions and billions of life forms, and their burial place too where they die and disintegrate. Then, foul water from all over the earth (despite much publicized ecological concerns voiced by the polluters themselves) ultimately gets delivered in it. Had this been sweet water, it would have gone bad within a day, and its stench would have been so severe that it would have become a health hazard for the dwellers on land. Therefore, nature made it so acidly brackish that it would just burn up the filth which keeps reaching it from all over the world. So, it was based on this wise consideration that the sea water was made salty, rather brackish, which cannot be drunk or used to quench thirst. Certainly great is the Divine system which not only made water planes designed as clouds to carry the priceless treasures of water, but did much more when it activated its own desalination without the help of huge mechanized plants used for this purpose in our time. It only took the period of time from the rising of the monsoons until the rains fell down on the earth that salt from sea water separated and sweet water was what we got. A reference to this appears in Sūrah Al-Mursalāt (77:27) where it is said: **وَأَسْقَيْنَكُم مَّاءً فُرَاتًا** It means: We gave you water to drink which quenches thirst. The word: **فُرَات** (*furāt*) used here signifies thirst-quenching sweet water. In other words, the sense is that Allah has made the salty water of the sea go through His own desalination plant in the clouds and has arranged for you to have sweet drinking water out of water which was brackish.

The same subject occurs in Sūrah Al-Wāqī'ah (56:68-70) where it is said:

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ ؕ أَمْ أَنزَلْنَاهُ مِن مَّعِينٍ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنزِلُونَ - لَوْ شَاءَ جَعَلْنَاهُ أَمْحًا فَلَوْلَا لَتَشْكُرُونَ

You see the water you drink? Is it you who bring it down from the cloud, or are We the senders? If We had willed, We would have made it bitter. Why, then, would you not be grateful?

Upto this point, we have seen the spectacular manifestation of Divine power as to how it has picked up water from the sea, changed it into sweet water, and delivered it through clouds all over the world with such efficiency of management that it reached not only the human beings of every region but was also passed on to animals and wildlife which are not within the range of human inquiry. Water was, so to say, home-delivered to them - and free of cost too, in fact, they had to have it.

But, this arrangement does not solve the problem faced by human beings and animals because they need water every day, rather every moment. Therefore, one method of fulfilling their daily demand was to have rains come every day, twelve months a year. But, under this arrangement, their elemental need for water would have been taken care of to a certain degree, however, the disturbance they would have faced in other economic activities is not difficult to foresee, at least for those who have the experience. Constant rain, every day of the year, would have affected health and caused gridlocks in transportation, hazards in movement and sluggishness in business.

Also possible was a second method that there be enough rain in particular months of the year so that the water from it becomes sufficient for the rest of the months. But, this method would have required that everyone be assigned a quota of water which may be entrusted to each such person with the ground rule that they would keep the quota and share of water thus received under their personal custody.

Now, just imagine. If this was done, how could every human being have managed to assemble enough water containers of suitable sizes and capacities in which water needed for a period of three to six months could be stored? Even if, this could somehow be done, it goes without saying that this water would have gone bad within a few days drinking which, in fact, using which for some other purpose would have been out of the question. Therefore, Divine power introduced yet another unique system to preserve it and make it become available as and when and where needed. We see that some portion of the water rained down is immediately put to use when it helps farms and trees to bloom and human beings and animals to quench their thirst. Part of it gets deposited and preserved in open ponds and lakes. Then a greater portion of it is transformed into ice - a frozen sea - which is so conveniently put atop moun-

tain peaks. Neither dust, nor filth can touch it. Had this water remained in the liquid form, there would have been the danger of its being contaminated with dust or filth brought by the winds. May be birds and animals would have fallen into it, and died, which would have spoiled this water. But, what Divine power did was to take this treasure of water, turn it into a virtual sea of ice, and put it on top of the mountains from where it keeps seeping into the pores of the mountains and then becomes what streams are and thus it reaches everywhere. Places where there are no streams either, water keeps flowing under the earth surface like human veins in every region of the world. Dig a well, it would come out.

To sum up, this Divine system of water supply holds thousands of blessings in its fold. First of all, the creation of water is in itself a great blessing. Then, making it reach all regions of the earth is the second blessing. Then, making it potable is the third blessing. Then, giving human beings the opportunity to drink it is the fourth blessing. Then, the formidable system of collecting and preserving water according to its need is the fifth blessing. And then, giving men and women of this world the ability to benefit by it is the sixth blessing - because, despite water being available, there may be unwelcome circumstances or natural and man-made calamities due to which one may not remain capable enough to drink water. In the present verse of the Holy Qur'an: فَاسْقِئْهُمْ مَاءَ أَنْتُمْ لَهُ، بِخَزَائِنَ (and gave it to you to drink, and you are not able to store it - 22), a clear hint has been given to these blessings, and also a warning (to those who refuse to see truth as it is):

فَبَارِكْ اللَّهُ أَحْسَنُ الْخَالِقِينَ

Blessed is Allah, the best of creators.

Going Ahead and Remaining Behind in Righteous Deeds : The Difference in Degrees

Some exegetic interpretations of the words: الْمُسْتَقْدِمِينَ (*al-mustaqdimīn*) : 'those who go ahead' and: الْمُسْتَخِيرِينَ (*al-musta'khirīn*) : 'those who remain behind' appearing in verse 24: وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُتَقْدِمِينَ مِنْكُمْ وَلَقَدْ عَلِمْنَا الْمُتَأَخِّرِينَ have been variously reported from Tafsīr authorities among the Ṣaḥābah and Ṭabī'īn. These are:

1. 'Al-Mustaqdimīn' are those born to date, and 'Al-Musta'khirīn' are those not born yet [Qatādah and Ṭkrimah].

2. 'Al-Mustaqdimīn' means the dead, and 'Al-Musta'khirīn' means those alive till now [Ibn 'Abbās and Ḍaḥḥāk]

3. 'Al-Mustaqdimīn' signifies good people who came before the appearance of the Ummah of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, and 'Al-Mustakhirīn' refers to his Ummah itself [Mujāhid].

4. 'Al-Mustaqdimīn' denotes people who obey Allah and do good deeds while 'Al-Musta'khirīn' refers to people who disobey Him and neglect what is good [Ḥasan and Qatādah]

5. 'Al-Mustaqdimīn' are people who remain ahead in the rows of Ṣalāh, or in the front lines of Jihād, and in other righteous deeds - and 'Al-Musta'khirīn' are those who remain behind in these deeds of merit, stay in the rear rows and are used to being late [which is the Tafsīr given by leading authorities Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Sa'id ibn al-Musaiyyab, al-Qurṭubī, al-Sha'bī and others]

It is obvious that there is no distinct conflict or contradiction in these sayings, in the real sense. They can be accomodated all in one because the all-encompassing knowledge of Allah Ta'ālā covers all kinds of people 'who go ahead' or 'remain behind.'

In his Tafsīr, Al-Qurṭubī has said that this verse indicates the merit of performing Ṣalāh in the first row, and soon after the time it becomes due. This is in accordance with the Ḥadīth where the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said: If people were to find out the enormous merit of calling the Adhān and standing in the first row of Ṣalāh, everyone would have started making the effort to necessarily stand in the first row, and when there would remain no space for everybody to stand there, lots would have to be drawn.

With this, Al-Qurṭubī has also reported the saying of Sayyidnā Ka'b رضي الله عنه : 'There are some people in this Ummah who, when they put their forehead on the ground for their Sajdah, forgiveness is granted to all those who are praying behind them.' Therefore, Sayyidnā Ka'b رضي الله عنه liked to be in the last row in the hope that 'perhaps, there may be in the front rows, some servant of Allah of the class, because of whose *barakah* (blissful presence), I may be forgiven.'

What is apparent here is that real merit does lie in praying in the

first row - as stands proved from the clear statements of the Qur'ān and Sunnah. But, a person who does not, for some reason, find a place in the first row, then, he too will have a sort of merit in that there may perhaps be some righteous servant of Allah praying in the front rows for whose sake, he too may be forgiven. And the way praying in the first row of Ṣalāh stands proved from this verse, also proved is the superiority of being in the front lines of Jihād.

Verses 26 - 44

وَلَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ ﴿٢٦﴾ وَالْجَانَّ
 خَلَقْنَاهُ مِنْ قَبْلُ مِنْ نَّارِ السَّمُومِ ﴿٢٧﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَكَةِ إِنِّي
 خَالِقٌ ٢ بَشَرًا مِّنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ ﴿٢٨﴾ فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ
 وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُّوحِي فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَاجِدِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَسَجَدَ الْمَلَائِكَةُ
 كُلُّهُمْ أَجْمَعُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾ إِلَّا إِبْلِيسَ ٣ أَبَىٰ أَنْ يَكُونَ مَعَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿٣١﴾
 قَالَ يَا إِبْلِيسُ مَا لَكَ أَلَّا تَكُونَ مَعَ السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿٣٢﴾ قَالَ لَمْ أَكُنْ
 لَأَسْجُدَ لِبَشَرٍ خَلَقْتَهُ مِنْ صَلْصَالٍ مِّنْ حَمَإٍ مَّسْنُونٍ ﴿٣٣﴾ قَالَ
 فَاهْرُجْ مِنْهَا فَإِنَّكَ رَجِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ وَإِنَّ عَلَيْكَ اللَّعْنَةَ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الدِّينِ
 ﴿٣٥﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ فَأَنْظِرْنِي إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ ﴿٣٦﴾ قَالَ فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ
 الْمُنْظَرِينَ ﴿٣٧﴾ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْوَقْتِ الْمَعْلُومِ ﴿٣٨﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ بِمَا أَغْوَيْتَنِي
 لَأَرِيَنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا أُغْوِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٣٩﴾ إِلَّا عِبَادَكَ مِنْهُمْ
 الْمُخْلِصِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ قَالَ هَذَا صِرَاطٌ عَلَيَّ مُسْتَقِيمٌ ﴿٤١﴾ إِنَّ عِبَادِي
 لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ إِلَّا مَنْ اتَّبَعَكَ مِنَ الْغَوِينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَإِنَّ جَهَنَّمَ
 لَمَوْعِدُهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٤٣﴾ تَفْلَ لَهَا سَبْعَةُ أَبْوَابٍ ٤ لِكُلِّ بَابٍ مِنْهُمْ جُزْءٌ
 مَّقْسُومٌ ٥ ﴿٤٤﴾

And We created man from a sound-giving clay made of decayed mud. [26] And "the Jānn" (the first Jinn) We had

created earlier from the fire of the hot wind. [27] And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to create a human being from a sound-giving clay made of decayed mud. [28] And when I form him perfect and blow in him of My spirit, you fall down before him, prostrating." [29] So the angels prostrated, all together, [30] except Iblīs. He refused to be among those who prostrated. [31] He (Allah) said, "O Iblīs, what is wrong with you that you did not join those who prostrated?" [32] He said, "I am not the one to prostrate before a human being whom You have created from a sound-giving clay made of decayed mud." [33] He said, "Then, get out from here for you are an outcast. [34] And upon you is the curse upto the day of Judgement." [35] He said, "O my Lord, then give me respite upto the day they (the dead) shall be raised." [36] He (Allah) said, "Well, you are among those given respite [37] till the day of the appointed time." [38] He said, "My Lord, since You made me go astray, I swear I shall adorn for them (evils) on the earth and shall lead all of them astray, [39] except those of Your servants from among them who are chosen (by You)." [40] He (Allah) said, "To Me, it is the straight path. [41] My servants are such that you have no power over them except those who follow you from the deviators. [42] And the Jahannam (Hell) is the promised place for them all. [43] It has seven gates. For each gate there is a group apportioned from them." [44]

Commentary

Blowing of Spirit into the Human Body and Making Angels Prostrate to him : A Brief Review

Is the spirit (*Rūḥ*) a physical entity, or pure essence? On this subject, there has been a difference of opinion among the learned since a long time. According to Ash-Shaykh 'Abd Al-Ra'ūf Al-Munāwī, there are upto a thousand positions taken by them. But, they are all based on conjectures. None of them can be called certain. Imām Al-Ghazālī, Imām Rāzī and mystic scholars and thinkers maintain that it is no physical entity. It is pure essence. Imām Rāzī has advanced twelve arguments in support of this view.

But, the majority of the 'Ulamā' of the Muslim Ummah declare *Rūḥ* (spirit, soul) to be a highly refined physical entity. The word: نَفْخ (*nafkh*) means to blow, to breathe into. If we were to go by the consensus of the

majority of 'Ulamā' and take Rūḥ to be a refined physical entity, then breathing into it becomes evident by itself. And if we were to accept it to be pure essence, then breathing into it would mean establishing its connection to the body. (Bayān al-Qur'ān)

Rūḥ (spirit) and Nafs (self) :

The View of Qāḍī Thanā'ullah رحمه الله تعالى

Leaving this long-winding debate aside, we consider it sufficient to refer the reader to a special research presented by Qāḍī Thanā'ullah Panīpatī رحمه الله تعالى in his Tafsīr Mazharī.

The respected commentator says that Rūḥ has two kinds: (1) Higher ('*Ulwī*') and (2) Lower ('*Siflī*'). The higher Rūḥ is bereft of matter and is a creation of Allah Ta'ālā the comprehension of whose reality is difficult. The masters of insight by illumination (*ahl al-kashf*) see its real station to be above the Throne ('*Arsh*') because it is more refined than the 'Arsh. And this higher Rūḥ, as seen through illumination, is sensed in five degrees at upper and lower levels. Their number is five and they are: (1) The heart (*Qalb*) (2) The spirit (*Rūḥ*) (3) The mystery (*Sirr*) (4) The secret (*Khafī*) (5) The most secret (*Akhfā*). These are all from the refinements of the domain of Divine command towards which the Holy Qur'ān has hinted by declaring: قُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي (Say, "The spirit is from the command of my Lord - 17:85).

As for the lower Rūḥ, it is a refined vapour which emerges from the combination of the four elements of the human body, that is, from fire, water, dust and air, and this lower Rūḥ is called the self (*nafs*).

Allah Ta'ālā has made this lower spirit called self a mirror of the higher spirits mentioned above. An illustration would make it clear. If we were to hold a mirror against the sun, then, despite that the sun is far far away, its reflection comes into the mirror. And because of the light, that too starts glowing like the sun. It even receives the heat of the sun in it which could burn a piece of cloth. The same thing applies to the higher spirits. Though they are, because of their purity and detachment, very high and elevated in station, and far distant too, yet their reflection appears in the mirror of the lower spirit and transfers the states and effects of the higher spirits into it. When these very effects take root in human selves, they become known as subordinate parts of each individual's spirit.

Then, this lower form of spirit which is identified as Nafs or self armed with the states and effects which it has acquired from the higher forms of spirits first gets connected with the heart muscle of the human body. This connection itself is another name for life. Once the lower spirit relates to the human heart, it infuses in it life and cognitions which it has acquired from the higher spirits. This lower spirit then starts circulating through the thin veins spread throughout the body and thus reaches every part of it.

It is this infusion of the lower spirit into the human body which has been called the 'blowing or breathing of the spirit' (نفخ الروح : the *nafkh* of *rūḥ*) because it bears close resemblance to blowing or breathing into something.

And, in the present verse, Allah Ta'ālā has attributed the spirit to Himself. He has said: 'مِنْ رُوحِي' (from My spirit) so that the superior status of the human spirit out of the entire creation becomes evident - because, it has come into existence, without any material substance, only under Divine command. In addition to that, it has a unique ability to accept and absorb the manifestations of Divine light, an ability which does not exist in the spirit of any other living creature other than that of the human person.

Though, dust is the dominant element in the creation of man - and that is why the creation of man has been attributed to clay - but, the reality is that man is a combination of ten elements out of which five belong to the universe of creation (عالم الخلق) while the other five to the universe of Divine command (عالم الأمر). The four elements of the universe of creation are fire, water, dust and air. The fifth is the refined vapour from these four which is called the lower spirit or *nafs*. As for the five elements of the universe of Divine command mentioned above, they are: (1) heart (*qalb*) (2) spirit (*rūḥ*) (3) mystery (*sirr*) (4) secret (*khaḥfiyy*) (5) totally hidden (*akhḥfa*).

It is because of this comprehensive making of the human model that man became deserving of Divine vice-regency, and very much capable of absorbing the light which helps him know his Lord and, of course, sustaining his own burning quest on the path of love and longing for Him. The outcome, though unspecified as to its actual state, is communion

with the Divine because the Holy Prophet ﷺ has said: 'الْمَرْءُ مَعَ مَنْ أَحَبَّ' (One shall be with whoever one loves).

And since human beings have the ability to absorb the manifestations of Divine light, and since they have been given the honour of being in communion with the Divine, it came to be the dictate of Divine wisdom that man be made the object of prostration by the angels. It was said: 'فَقَعُوا لَهُ سَجْدِينَ' (you fall down before him, prostrating - 29)

The Command to Prostrate was Given to Angels - Iblīs was to Follow Suit

Addressing Iblīs in Sūrah Al-A'raf, it was said: مَا مَنَعَكَ أَلَّا تَسْجُدَ إِذْ أَمَرْتُكَ (What stopped you from prostrating when I ordered you? - 7:12). This shows that the command to prostrate was given, alongwith the angels, to Iblīs as well. However, the verses you have gone through a little earlier apparently give the sense that the command was particular to the angels. This could mean that the command was originally given to the angels but, as Iblīs too was present among the angels, therefore, he too was covered by this command as a corollary - because, when the command went forth for the most august creation of Allah Ta'ālā, that is, the angels, that they pay their homage to Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام, it was obvious that any other creation was bound to follow suit under this command. It was for this reason that Iblīs did not respond by saying that he was never asked to prostrate to begin with, so he could not be charged with the crime of non-compliance of the order. Perhaps, the words of the Qur'an here: 'أَبَى أَنْ يَكُونَ مَعَ السَّاجِدِينَ' (He refused to be among those who prostrated - 30) may contain a hint in that direction. Rather than say: 'أَبَى أَنْ يَسْجُدَ' that is, 'he refused to prostrate', what was actually said was: 'أَبَى أَنْ يَكُونَ مَعَ السَّاجِدِينَ' he refused to be among those who prostrated. This indicates that the main prostraters were after all the angels but Iblīs too, being present with them, was reason-bound to join the prostrating angels. So, the Divine wrath was against his failure to join.

The Meaning of Shayṭān Having No Power over Special Servants of Allah

From the verse: إِنَّ عِبَادِي لَيْسَ لَكَ عَلَيْهِمْ سُلْطَانٌ (My servants are such that you have no power over them - 42), we learn that there are special and chosen servants of Allah Ta'ālā who are not affected by Satanic deception. But, within this event relating to Sayyidnā 'Ādam عليه السلام, it has also been

said that the deception of Satan worked in the case of Sayyidnā 'Ādam and Ḥawwā'. Similarly, about the noble Companions, the Qur'an has said: إِنَّمَا اسْتَكْبَرُوا الشَّيْطَانَ فَبِعِزِّ مَآ كَسَبُوا (Satan had but made them slip for some of their deeds - 3:155) which tells us that there was an occasion (during the Battle of Uḥud) when the evil plan of the Satan worked against the Companions as well.

Therefore, in the present verse, the sense of saying that the special servants of Allah are such that Satan has no power over them is that their hearts and minds never come under the power and sway of Satan to the extent that would just not become alerted to their error at all, because of which, they would remain deprived of necessary repentance for ever, or that they fall into some sin the forgiveness of which would become impossible.

As for the events mentioned above, they offer no contradiction because 'Ādam and Ḥawwā' عليهما السلام made their Taubah and this repentance was accepted. Similarly, the noble Companions referred to above had also made their Taubah. Thus, whatever sin they fell into because of the mechanization of Satan was forgiven.

The Seven Gates of Jahannam

About the statement: لَهَا سَبْعَةُ أَبْوَابٍ (It has seven gates - 44), according to a narration of Sayyidnā 'Alī رضي الله عنه reported by Imām Aḥmad, Ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī and Al-Baihaqī, the seven gates of Jahannam (Hell) are in terms of seven levels, one upon the other. Some others have taken these as common gates where every gate will be reserved for a special kind of sinners. (Qurṭubī)

Verses 45 - 50

إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ ﴿٤٥﴾ أُدْخِلُوهَا بِسَلَامٍ أَمِينٍ ﴿٤٦﴾
وَنَزَعْنَا مَا فِي صُدُورِهِمْ مِنْ غِلٍّ إِخْوَانًا عَلَى سُرُرٍ مُتَقَابِلِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾
لَا يَمَسُّهُمْ فِيهَا نَصَبٌ وَمَا هُمْ مِنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِينَ ﴿٤٨﴾ نَبِيُّ عِبَادِيَ أَنِّي
أَنَا الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ ﴿٤٩﴾ وَأَنَّ عَذَابِي هُوَ الْعَذَابُ الْأَلِيمُ ﴿٥٠﴾

Surely, the God-fearing are in Gardens and streams: [45]

"Enter here in peace, free of fear." [46] And We shall have removed whatever grudge they had in their hearts (making them) brothers, sitting on couches, face to face. [47] No weariness shall touch them nor will they be expelled from there. [48]

Tell My servants that I am the Most-Forgiving, the Very-Merciful [49] and that My punishment is the painful punishment. [50]

Commentary

According to Sayyidnā 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās ؓ, when the people of Jannah will enter Jannah, first of all two streams of water will be presented before them. They will drink water from the first stream and all mutual grudges they had from their life in the mortal world - the effect of which naturally survived right through the end - will be totally washed away. In its place, they all will feel love for each other in their hearts because mutual bickering too is virtually a pain and punishment as such, and Jannah is free of all pain.

As for the report appearing in Ṣaḥīḥ Ḥadīth: 'Anyone who nurses the least grudge in his heart against a Muslim will not go to Jannah,' it means the grudge and malice which is rooted in material ends, and is there by one's personal intention and choice, and because of which this person keeps looking for an opportunity to inflict pain or loss on his enemy. Being ill at ease in someone's company as a matter of natural temperament, a human trait beyond one's control, is not included here. Similar is the case of what is based on some Islamic legal ground. It is this kind of grudge which has been referred to in this verse and where it has been said that such grudge and temperamental distaste will be removed from their hearts.

It is about this kind of grudge that Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ said: "I hope that I shall be, alongwith Ṭalḥa and Zubayr, among those the dust of mutual anxiety from whose hearts will be removed while entering Jannah." The reference here is to the difference of opinion and resulting conflict which took place between Sayyidnā Ṭalḥa ؓ and Sayyidnā Zubayr ؓ and Sayyidnā 'Alī ؓ.

From verse 48: لَا يَسْهُمُ فِيهَا نَصَبٌ وَمَا هُمْ مِنْهَا بِمُخْرِجِينَ (No weariness shall touch them therein nor will they be expelled from there), we learn about

two features of Jannah: (1) No one shall ever feel tired or weak. This is contrary to what happens in our mortal world where hard work naturally results in fatigue. In fact, even a state of total rest and fun would sometimes tire a person out, no matter how enjoyable are things one is occupied with.

(2) The other feature of Jannah we discover is that the blessings once received there shall be eternal. These blessings shall never diminish nor shall anyone be expelled from there. In Sūrah Ṣād, it was said: *إِنَّ هَذَا لَرِزْقُنَا* (This is sustenance provided by Us which is never to exhaust - 38:54). And in the present verse, it was said: *وَمَا هُمْ مِنْهَا بِمُخْرَجِينَ* (nor will they be expelled from there) that is, they shall never be deprived of the state of bliss bestowed upon them. This is contrary to the affairs of the mortal world where the recipient of the best of conveniences lives under the apprehension that the giver of the facilities may become displeased with him one of those days and expel him out.

As for the third probability, that the blessings of Jannah may remain everlasting, nor one is expelled from there, but one may himself get bored by living there and wish to go out, the Qur'an has demolished this probability in one sentence of Sūrah Al-Kahf with the following words: *لَا يَمُوتُونَ عَنْهَا حَوْلًا* (That is, these people too would never seek to return from there - 18:108).

Verses 51 - 77

وَنَبِّئُهُمْ عَنْ ضَيْفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ ﴿٥١﴾ إِذْ دَخَلُوا عَلَيْهِ فَقَالُوا سَلَامًا ۖ قَالَ إِنَّا مِنْكُمْ وَجِلُونَ ﴿٥٢﴾ قَالُوا لَا تَوْجَلْ إِنَّا نُبَشِّرُكَ بِغُلَامٍ عَلِيمٍ ﴿٥٣﴾ قَالَ أَبَشْرْتُمُونِي عَلَىٰ أَنْ مَسْنَىٰ الْكَبِيرِ ۖ قِيمَ تَبَشِّرُونَ ﴿٥٤﴾ قَالُوا بَشْرْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ فَلَا تَكُنْ مِنَ الْقَنِطِينَ ﴿٥٥﴾ قَالَ وَمَنْ يَقْنَطُ مِنْ رَحْمَةِ رَبِّهِ إِلَّا الضَّالُّونَ ﴿٥٦﴾ قَالَ فَمَا خَطْبُكُمْ أَيُّهَا الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾ قَالُوا إِنَّا أُرْسِلْنَا إِلَىٰ قَوْمٍ مُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٥٨﴾ إِلَّا آلَ لُوطٍ ۖ إِنَّا لَمُنَجُّوهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾ إِلَّا امْرَأَتَهُ قَدَرْنَا ۖ إِنَّمَا لِمَنِ الْغَابِرِينَ ﴿٦٠﴾ فَلَمَّا جَاءَ آلَ لُوطٍ

الْمُرْسَلُونَ ﴿٦١﴾ قَالَ إِنَّكُمْ قَوْمٌ مُنْكَرُونَ ﴿٦٢﴾ قَالُوا بَلْ جِنَّتَ بِمَا
 كَانُوا فِيهِ يَمْتَرُونَ ﴿٦٣﴾ وَآتَيْنَكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّا لَصَادِقُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ فَاسْرِ
 بِأَهْلِكَ بِقِطْعٍ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ وَاتَّبِعْ أَدْبَارَهُمْ وَلَا يَلْتَفِتْ مِنْكُمْ أَحَدٌ وَامْضُوا
 حَيْثُ تُؤْمَرُونَ ﴿٦٥﴾ وَقَضَيْنَا إِلَيْهِ ذَلِكَ الْأَمْرَ أَنَّ دَابِرَ هَؤُلَاءِ مَقْطُوعٌ
 مُصْبِحِينَ ﴿٦٦﴾ وَجَاءَ أَهْلَ الْمَدِينَةِ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ ﴿٦٧﴾ قَالَ إِنَّ هَؤُلَاءِ
 ضِيفَىٰ فَلَا تَفْضَحُونِ ﴿٦٨﴾ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَلَا تُخْزُونِ ﴿٦٩﴾ قَالُوا أَوَلَمْ
 نَنْهَكَ عَنِ الْعَلَمِينَ ﴿٧٠﴾ قَالَ هَؤُلَاءِ بَنَاتِي إِنْ كُنْتُمْ فَعِلِينَ ﴿٧١﴾
 لَعَمْرُكَ إِنَّهُمْ لَفِي سَكْرَتِهِمْ يَعْمَهُونَ ﴿٧٢﴾ فَأَخَذَتْهُمُ الصَّيْحَةُ
 مُشْرِقِينَ ﴿٧٣﴾ فَجَعَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا سَاءَ فَلْهَا وَآمُطَرْنَا عَلَيْهِمْ حِجَارَةً مِنْ
 سِجِّيلٍ ﴿٧٤﴾ إِنْ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْمُتَوَسِّمِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾ وَإِنَّهَا لَبِسَبِيلٍ
 مُّقِيمٍ ﴿٧٦﴾ إِنْ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةٌ لِّلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٧٧﴾

And tell them about the guests of Ibrāhīm. [51] When they visited him, they greeted him with Salām (peace on you). He said, "We are scared of you." [52] They said, "Do not be scared. We give you good news of a boy who will be knowledgeable." [53] He said, "Do you give me the good news while old age has befallen me? So what is the good news you are giving to me?" [54] They said, "We have given to you the good news of a fact. So do not be among those who lose hope." [55] He said, "Who would lose hope in the mercy of his Lord except those who have lost the straight path?" [56] He said, "Then, what is your mission, O messengers?" [57] They said, "We have been sent to a sinful people, [58] except the family of Lūṭ - all of whom we shall save, [59] but his wife. We have ordained that she is to be among those who will remain behind." [60]

So when the messengers came to the family of Lūṭ, [61] he said, "you are an unusual people." [62] They said, "No, but we have brought to you what they have been doubting in. [63] And we have come to you with a definite matter and surely we are truthful. [64] So, carry your family

after a part of the night (has passed) and follow them at the rear and no one from you should look back and keep going to where you are commanded." [65] And We revealed to him the fact that they are to be annihilated to the last man when they see the morning. [66]

And the people of the city came rejoicing. [67] He (Lūṭ) said, "They are my guests; so do not put me to shame [68] and fear Allah and do not disgrace me." [69] They said, "Had we not forbidden you from (being the guardian of) the whole world?" [70] He said, "These are my daughters, (for marriage) if you are to do so." [71]

By your life, (O prophet) they are wandering blindly in their intoxication (misguidance). [72] So, they were seized by the Cry at sunrise. [73] Then, We turned it (the city) upside down and sent over them rain of stones made of clay. [74]

Surely, in that there are signs for those who read signs. [75] And surely, it (their city) is located on the straight road. [76] Surely, in it there are signs for the believers. [77]

Commentary

A Great Honour for the Holy Prophet ﷺ

About the word of Allah: لَمْرُكَ (*la'amruk* : By your life), the majority of commentators, as reported in Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī, have said that the addressee of '*la'amruka*' is the Holy Prophet ﷺ. It is his life that Allah Ta'ālā has sworn by. Al-Baihaqī in Da'lā'ilun-Nubūwwah, and Abū Nu'aym, Ibn Marduwayh and others have reported from Sayyidnā 'Abdullah ibn 'Abbās ؓ that Allah Ta'ālā has not bestowed on anyone in the whole creation an honour and rank higher than that of Sayyidnā Muḥammad al-Muṣṭafā ﷺ. This is the reason why Allah Ta'ālā has never sworn by the life of any prophet or angel, while in this verse, He has sworn by the age and life of the Holy Prophet ﷺ - which is the highest conceivable honour and deference accorded to him.

Swearing by Non-Allah

To swear by anyone or anything, other than the names and attributes of Allah Ta'ālā, is not permissible for any human being because one would only swear by whoever is held in the highest of esteem - and, as obvious, Allah alone can be the highest.

According to Ḥadīth, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said: Do not swear by your mothers, fathers and idols. And do not swear by anyone except Allah - and if you have to swear by Allah, do it only when you are truthful in your statement. (Reported by Abū Dāwūd and An-Nasā'ī from Sayyidnā Abū Hurairah ؓ)

It appears in the Ṣaḥīḥayn (the Ṣaḥīḥ of Al-Bukhārī and the Ṣaḥīḥ of Muslim) that the Holy Prophet ﷺ once saw Sayyidnā 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb ؓ swearing by his father. He called out to him and said: 'Watch out! Allah Ta'ālā forbids swearing by fathers. Whoever has to take an oath, let him do it in the name of Allah, otherwise, let him be silent. (Al-Qurṭubī under the commentary on Sūrah al-Ma'īdah)

But, this injunction applies to Allah's creation in general. As for Allah Ta'ālā Himself, He swears by different things He has created. This is particular to Him. Its purpose is to state the sublimity and beneficence of something from the desired angle. Then, the cause of forbidding common people from swearing by anyone other than Allah is not present here - because, in the Word of Allah there is no probability that He would take someone from His creation to be the highest and the best. Again, the reason is that absolute greatness is particular only with Allah Ta'ālā.

Learn Your Essential Lesson From Sites Ruined by Divine Punishment

In verses 75 and 76: ﴿إِنَّ فِيْ ذٰلِكَ لَاٰيٰتٍ لِّلْمُتَوَسِّمِيْنَ ۝۷۰﴾ وَأَنّٰهَا لَبَسِيْلٌ مَّقِيْمٌ ﴿۷۱﴾ (Surely, in that there are signs for those who read signs. And surely, it [their city] is located on the straight road), Allah Ta'ālā has pointed out to the geographical location of such ruined cities which fall on the main road which takes people from Arabia to Syria. Also said with it was that in them there are great signs of the perfect power of Allah Ta'ālā for those who believe and have the necessary hindsight and foresight.

About this, there is another statement in Sūrah al-Qaṣaṣ where it was said: ﴿لَمْ تُسْكَنْ مِنْ بَعْدِهِمْ إِلَّا قَلِيْلًا﴾ (not lived in after them except a little - 28:58). In other words, after their destruction by Divine punishment, these habitations were not repopulated except some. So, by combining these indicators, we can see that Allah Ta'ālā has made these ruined habitations and homes a site from which coming generations could learn

their essential lesson.

This is the reason why the Holy Prophet ﷺ, whenever he has passed by these sites, went through a particular emotional state under which he would be overwhelmed by the awe of Almighty Allah and which caused his blessed head to lower down and he would then try to make his mount hasten through these sites. This particular mode of action taken by the Holy Prophet ﷺ has established the *sunnah* that making sites which have been hit by Divine punishment a place of picnic and amusement is hard-heartedness at its ugliest. Rather than do something like that, the only method of learning a lesson from them is to think about and feel the very presence of the most perfect power of Allah Ta'ālā on the site being visited which should cause one to tremble with the fear of His punishment.

The habitations of the time of Sayyidnā Lūṭ عليه السلام which were overturned are located, as said by the Qur'ān, on the Arabia-Syria route. This site is still present in the proximity of Jordan in the form of a wilderness below the sea level. On a major portion, flows a particular kind of water like a river. Sea life cannot survive here. Therefore, it is called the Dead Sea or the Sea of Lūṭ.

The local Department of Archaeology has set up some hotels and residential quarters at this site to attract tourists. The result is that people with an incorrigible infatuation with the material and who are equally dismissive of the concerns of the Hereafter have made this site a place of fun and frolic. People go there to enjoy the sights of the ancient. Lest such heedlessness becomes a habit, the Holy Qur'ān has served a warning towards the end by saying: إِنَّ فِيْ ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ (Surely, in it there are signs for the believers). It means: In reality, these sites and the events associated with them are full of moral lessons for everyone having insight. But, it is the good fortune of believers only who would benefit by learning what these sites teach, while others would go through these sites as tourists and leave empty-handed.

Verses 78 - 86

وَأِنْ كَانَ أَصْحَابُ الْآيَةِ لَظَالِمِينَ ﴿٧٨﴾ فَانْتَقَمْنَا مِنْهُمْ، وَإِنَّهُمْ

لِبِإِمَامٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿٧٩﴾ وَقَدْ كَذَبَ أَصْحَابُ الْحِجْرِ الْمُرْسَلِينَ ﴿٨٠﴾
 وَآتَيْنَهُمْ آيَاتِنَا فَكَانُوا عَنْهَا مُعْرِضِينَ ﴿٨١﴾ وَكَانُوا يُنْحِتُونَ مِنَ
 الْجِبَالِ تُبُوتًا آمِنِينَ ﴿٨٢﴾ فَأَخَذَتْهُمْ الصُّيْحَةُ مُصْبِحِينَ ﴿٨٣﴾ فَمَا
 أَغْنَى عَنْهُمْ مَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ ﴿٨٤﴾ وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ
 وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا إِلَّا بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّ السَّاعَةَ لَآتِيَةٌ فَاصْفَحِ الصَّفْحَ الْجَمِيلَ
 ﴿٨٥﴾ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ الْخَلَّاقُ الْعَلِيمُ ﴿٨٦﴾

And, indeed, the people of Aikah were transgressors. [78]
 So, We punished them in retribution and both of them
 are (situated) by a highway, clearly visible. [79]

And the people of Al-Ḥijr did belie the messengers. [80]
 And We provided them with Our signs yet they kept
 turning away from them. [81] They would hew out
 houses from the hills, in peace. [82] Then, the Cry seized
 them by the morning. [83] So, whatever they earned did
 not come to their help. [84]

And We did not create the heavens and the earth and
 whatever is there in between them but with truth. And
 the Hour is sure to come. Therefore, overlook in a gra-
 cious manner. [85] Surely, your Lord is the Master - Crea-
 tor, the All-Knowing. [86]

Commentary

Aikah means a dense forest. There are other views too. Some com-
 mentators say that there was a dense forest near Madyan, therefore,
 Aikah is actually the title of the people of Madyan. Others have said
 that the people of Aikah and the people of Madyan were two different
 people. It was after the destruction of one of them that Sayyidnā
 Shu'ayb عليه السلام was sent to the other.

In Tafsīr Rūḥ al-Ma'ānī, the following *marfū' ḥadīth* appears with
 reference to Ibn 'Asākir:

إِنَّ مَدْيَنَ وَأَصْحَابَ الْاَيْكَةِ اِمْتَنَانِ بَعَثَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى إِلَيْهِمَا شُعَيْبًا

Madyan and the people of Aikah are two peoples. Allah Ta'ālā
 sent Shu'ayb to them.

And Al-Ḥijr is a valley situated in between Ḥijāz and Syria. It was inhabited by the people of Thamūd.

A Brief Explanation

Described at the beginning of the Sūrah was the hostility of the disbelievers of Makkah against the Holy Prophet ﷺ which also carried words of comfort for him briefly. Now, at the end of the Sūrah, more words of comfort appear to mollify his concern about their grudge and hostility.

Here, he is being asked not to grieve over their hostile opposition because there is a day when all scores will be settled, and that is the day of Judgement, and it is bound to come as he has been told. Then, there is the fact that Allah did not create the heavens and the earth and whatever is there in between them but with truth and wisdom. The wise consideration behind this creation is that people should believe in the existence of the maker of the universe, attest to His Oneness and supremacy and obey His injunctions. Also present there is the consequence of not doing so, after the argument of Allah stands established, that the defaulter be punished. Since this promised punishment does not seem to come in full right here in this mortal world, it has to be somewhere else. For that, the time is fixed, the time of the Qiyāmah, the day of Judgement. And this Hour is sure to come. Everyone will be taken care of there.

This being the wise arrangement of things, let him not grieve. The better course for him is to overlook their wicked behaviour in a gracious manner, that is, neither pay attention to their behavior nor complain about it. The reason is that his Lord is great as Creator and great as the Master Knower as well. He knows his patience and fortitude and He knows the evil mechanizations of his enemies too. Therefore, He is to exact the full return from them of what they have been doing.

Verses 87 - 99

وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَكَ سَبْعًا مِّنَ الْمَثَانِي وَالْقُرْآنَ الْعَظِيمَ ﴿٨٧﴾ لَا تَمُدَّنَّ عَيْنَيْكَ
إِلَى مَا مَتَّعْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْهُمْ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَخَفَضْ جَنَاحَكَ
لِلْمُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٨٨﴾ وَقُلْ إِنِّي أَنَا النَّذِيرُ الْمُبِينُ ﴿٨٩﴾ كَمَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَى
الْمُقْتَسِمِينَ ﴿٩٠﴾ الَّذِينَ جَعَلُوا الْقُرْآنَ عِضِينَ ﴿٩١﴾ فَوَرَبِّكَ

لَنَسْأَلَنَّهُمْ أَجْمَعِينَ ﴿٩٢﴾ عَمَّا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٩٣﴾ فَاصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ
وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْمُشْرِكِينَ ﴿٩٤﴾ إِنَّا كَفَيْنَا الْمُسْتَهِزِّينَ ﴿٩٥﴾ الَّذِينَ
يَجْعَلُونَ مَعَ اللَّهِ إِلَهًا آخَرَ ۚ فَسَوْفَ يَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩٦﴾ وَلَقَدْ نَعْلَمُ أَنَّكَ
يَضِيقُ صَدْرُكَ بِمَا يَقُولُونَ ﴿٩٧﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَكُنْ مِنَ
السَّاجِدِينَ ﴿٩٨﴾ وَاعْبُدْ رَبَّكَ حَتَّى يَأْتِيَكَ الْيَقِينُ ﴿٩٩﴾

And We have given you the seven oft-repeated verses and the glorious Qur'an. [87] Never stretch your eyes towards what We have given to groups of them to enjoy and do not grieve for them, and be kind to believers in humbleness. [88] And say, 'I am the one who warns clearly (against punishment) [89] as We sent down upon the schismatics [90] who split the Qur'an into bits. [91] So, by your Lord, We shall question them all, [92] about what they have been doing. [93]

Now, proclaim what you are commanded to and turn away from the *mushriks* (polytheists). [94] Surely, We are sufficient for you against those who deride, [95] those who take to another god alongwith Allah. So, they shall soon learn. [96] And We know that your heart feels distressed for what they say. [97] So, proclaim the purity, and glory of your Lord and be among those who prostrate. [98] And worship your Lord until comes to you that which is certain. [99]

Commentary

Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah is the Text and Summary of the Whole Qur'an

That Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah (The Opening) has been called the Glorious Qur'an in this verse (87) indicates that Sūrah Al-Fātiḥah is, in a way, the whole Qur'an - because the basic principles of Islām have been merged in it.¹

1. In order to understand this, one must keep in mind that the words: السبع المثاني والقرآن العظيم (the seven oft-repeated verses and the glorious Qur'an) in verse (87) are interpreted by the commentators in different ways. Most of them are of the view that 'seven oft-repeated verses' refer to Sūrah al-Fātiḥah which consists of seven verses. Since these seven verses are repeated in every *Ṣalāh*, they have been referred to in the verse 87 as 'oft-repeated verses'. Then, the words 'and the glorious Qur'an' occurring after it are of explanatory nature which refer to the same 'seven oft-repeated verses'. Therefore, the name of the 'glorious Qur'an' has been given here to the Sūrah al-Fātiḥah itself. The comment of the author is based on this interpretation.

On Being Questioned in Al-Maḥshar : About what will it be?

In verse 92, swearing by His Own sacred Being, Allah Ta'ālā has declared that all such people who came earlier or later shall definitely be questioned.

The Ṣaḥābah رضى الله عنهم اجمعين asked the Holy Prophet ﷺ as to what it will be about. He said that it will be about saying: لا اله الا الله (*lā ilāha illallāh* : there is no god worthy of worship but Allah). Al-Qurṭubī, after reporting this narration in his Tafsīr, has said: It means the fulfilling of this pledge practically as signified by the Kalimah Ṭayyibah: *Lā ilāha illallāh*. A simple verbal statement is not what is desired here because, as for verbal attestation, that was done by the hypocrites (*munāfiqīn*) too. Ḥaḍrat al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī رحمه الله تعالى said: 'Īmān (faith) does not become a living reality by taking on a particular style and form, and *Dīn* (religion) does not prosper by simply having the best of wishes for it. 'Īmān is the name of that certitude which has been poured into the heart and which has been proved true by deeds. This is well illustrated by a Ḥaḍīth from Sayyidnā Zayd ibn Arqam ؓ in which the Holy Prophet ﷺ has been reported to have said: A person who says: لا اله الا الله (*lā ilāha illallāh* : there is no god worthy of worship but Allah) with *ikhhlāṣ* (totally unalloyed sincerity) will definitely go to Jannah. People asked: *Yā Rasūl Allāh*, how is '*ikhhlāṣ*' related to this Kalimah? He said: When this Kalimah stops a person from what has been prohibited by Allah as unlawful and impermissible, then, it is with '*ikhhlāṣ*' (with sincerity in the absolute sense). (Qurṭubī)

On Spreading the Religious Message Stage by Stage As Convenient

Before the revelation of the verse (94): فَاصْدَعْ بِمَا تُؤْمَرُ (Now, proclaim what you are commanded to), the Holy Prophet ﷺ and his noble Ṣaḥābah رضى الله عنهم اجمعين used to make Ṣalāh and recite Qur'ān secretly (lest they are seen and harmed). The process of passing on the religious message to others and the mission of teaching and training was also kept secret being limited to a counted few. The reason was that doing so openly would have given the disbelievers the opportunity to bring harm to them. In this verse (95), Allah Ta'ālā has Himself taken the responsibility of seeing that they stay safe against those who deride their faith and bring harm to them. Therefore, from that time onwards, the mission was

pursued openly and publicly in all its aspects, recitation of the Qur'ān, acts of worship, the call, the propagation, everything.

The people who have been referred to in the verse: **إِنَّا كَفَيْنَاكَ الْمُسْتَهْزِئِينَ** (Surely, We are sufficient for you against those who deride - 95) their ring leaders were five in number: (1) Al-'Āṣ ibn Wā'il (2) Aswad ibn al-Muṭṭalib (3) Aswad ibn 'Abd Yaghūth (4) Walīd ibn Mughīrah (5) Ḥārith ibn Ṭalḥah. They were killed simultaneously and miraculously when signalled by Sayyidnā Jibrā'īl.

This event provides a guideline in matters of Tablīgh and Da'wah. In places and under circumstances where a worker in the way of Allah sees no good coming out of saying what is true and right openly, rather apprehends harm coming to him in doing so, then, under such conditions, doing so secretly is also correct and permissible. However, when there is the option and ability to proclaim things openly, then, no delay should be made in taking a public stance.

The Spiritual Defence Against Enemy Hostility

From verses 97 and 98, we learn that should one face heart-rending sayings and doings of enemies the anxiety from which bothers him, then, there is a spiritual cure for that condition: Let him or her get busy with Tasbīḥ and 'Ibādah, praising Allah Ta'ālā and praying before Him. Allah Ta'ālā will Himself remove this pain and anxiety.

Alḥamdulillāh
The Commentary on
Sūrah Al-Ḥijr
Ends here.